

Measures found in earlier research to have an effect on net migration and included in the final model were the change in manufacturing establishments, the poverty rate, the percent of young adults (age 18-24), and the proportion of middle-aged adults (age 25-44).⁶ Both the proportion of young and of middle-aged adults, the most mobile segments of the population, had a significant dampening effect on population growth through net migration. The poverty rate and the change in manufacturing establishments had no significant effect.

3. Household income grows in counties where arts and design is strong

When economic growth occurs in a county along with attracting and retaining residents, it indicates an increase in the overall well being of the people living there. Including the same factors that were considered as possible influences on net migration, RTS investigated the influences on growth in a county's median household income (1989-1999). Results of the investigation demonstrated that, just as with growth through net migration, when establishments grew and the percent of arts and design workers was high, the county's median household income was high. Additionally, the percent of the population age 25-44 had a significant positive impact on household income growth, presumably because those in this age group are at or approaching the height of their career.

The presence of arts and design workers clearly attracts residents to a county as well as tourists willing to spend money in the area. Growth in household income as well as population growth in these counties with a concentration of arts and design workers indicates that the presence of arts-related activity is associated with expansion and vibrancy in an area.

⁶ In trials of different models, RTS also included a measure of urban-rural population density, a measurement of amenities, level of education, and arts and design-related establishments. Those measures were dropped in the final version of the model either because counties in North Carolina were not sufficiently different from each other on the measure or because it was so highly related to other measures that its inclusion added nothing more to the model.